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MANAGEMENT AUDIT

of the

DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS

HIRING AND TIMEKEEPING  
PROBLEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

by

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## HIRING AND TIMEKEEPING PROBLEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary

The Management Services Division has reviewed the hiring and timekeeping procedures of the Department of Recreation and Parks. Our review has been confined to the two major branches of the Department: Recreation Supervision and Services; and Buildings, Facilities and Parks Maintenance.

Our detailed findings are presented in the Findings Section of this report. Audit team members have interviewed key management personnel and various Area and District Supervisors and Recreation Center Directors, as well as personnel from other concerned City departments. We have found several weaknesses in the Department's hiring and timekeeping areas which should be corrected.

In general, there is a tendency to select persons for exempt positions who are known by the recreation directors or their staff as a result of participation in center activities. Although there may be nothing wrong with this approach in any given case, especially where the individual has volunteered considerable time and has clearly demonstrated his ability, in our opinion a greater effort can and should be made to give everyone who may be interested an opportunity to be considered.

We have identified the following hiring problems which need attention:

1. Failure to develop and administer proper employment criteria for exempt positions to insure that the most qualified candidates are selected.
2. A lack of publicity about exempt job opportunities.
3. Hiring of relatives through exempt appointments.
4. Persons in City-funded positions being allowed to resign to be rehired into higher paying Federally-funded positions.
5. Persons being employed in exempt job classifications, the duties of which they do not perform.
6. Permitting advance step placement in exempt positions without proper approvals and making it possible for persons to receive



# STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Summary

The Management Services Division has reviewed the hiring and timekeeping procedures of the Department of Recreation and Parks. Our review has been confined to the two major branches of the Department: Recreation Services and Services. The following findings and recommendations are presented:

Our detailed findings are presented in the Findings Section of this report. Not a few members have indicated that management personnel and staff are not working as well as personnel from other city departments. We have found several weaknesses in the Department's hiring and timekeeping areas which should be corrected.

In general, there is a tendency to select persons for example positions who are known by the recreation director or their staff as a result of personal or family activities. Although there may be nothing wrong with this approach in any given case, especially where the individual has demonstrated considerable time and has clearly demonstrated ability, in our opinion a greater effort can and should be made to give everyone who may be interested an opportunity to be considered.

We have identified the following hiring problems which need attention:

1. Failure to develop and administer proper employment criteria for exact positions so that the most qualified candidates are selected.
2. A lack of publicity about existing job opportunities.
3. Failure to maintain thorough records of applicants.
4. Failure to keep detailed position lists and to assign to be selected and higher quality candidates.
5. Failure to keep records of current and former employees and to maintain a list of persons who are not selected.
6. Failure to develop and maintain a list of persons who are not selected and to maintain a list of persons who are not selected.

higher compensation by using exempt classifications instead of the appropriate Civil Service class.

7. Filling exempt positions at centers prior to Department approval because of slowness in processing documents.
8. Possible favoritism in the pre-selection of summer workers.

With respect to timekeeping, we have found that the existing practices are not uniform and do not provide adequate control. Time reporting methods differ among organizational units. In many cases employees do not personally report in writing the time they have worked, and timekeeping is done on an exception basis. A more positive timekeeping system should be established throughout the Department to prevent potential abuse. Also, a number of exempt employees have worked more than 40 hours in a two-week period apparently in violation of Charter Section 111. The legality of this practice should be established.

higher compensation by doing exempt classifications instead of the appropriate civil service class.

7. Filling vacant positions is done prior to Department approval because of numerous processing documents.

8. Possible favoritism in the reclassification of summer workers.

With respect to timekeeping, we have found that the existing practice is not uniform and do not provide adequate control. Time keeping method differ among regional and units. In many cases employees do not personally report in writing the time they have worked, and timekeeping is done on an exception basis. A more precise timekeeping system should be established throughout the Department to prevent potential abuse. Also, a number of exempt employees have worked more than 40 hours in a two-week period apparently in violation of Chapter Section 11. The legality of this practice should be established.

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### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners take the following action to improve hiring and timekeeping procedures:

1. Instruct staff to review and update qualifications for the exempt positions and to adhere to these qualifications unless approval to deviate is obtained from the Executive Officer.
2. Adopt a policy that a permanent notice be posted on the bulletin board at each recreation center to advise that anyone wishing to be considered for an exempt position of Recreation Assistant when an opening occurs should contact the center Director and complete an application; and further, that a copy of all applications submitted by persons with specialized skills who qualify for Recreation Assistant III be forwarded to the District Recreation Supervisor for consideration when such skills are needed at other centers.
3. Adopt a policy that no relative of a regular employee of the Department will be appointed to an exempt position or appointed on an emergency basis.
4. Adopt a policy that no person in a City-funded position be rehired in a Federally-funded position which is exempt or is to be filled by emergency appointment unless approval in writing is obtained from the Personnel Department.
5. Instruct staff to make certain that persons are not appointed to positions unless they will be performing the duties specified for that classification.
6. Modify the Department Personnel Resolution to provide that only the General Manager will approve advance step hiring for exempt positions and that he will do this in writing.
7. Instruct staff to develop and implement procedures to shorten the time required to fill exempt positions and to stop making appointments prior to the necessary Department approvals.
8. Review, in cooperation with the Personnel Department, the policy of pre-selection of summer workers.
9. Instruct staff to prepare and implement improved procedures for reporting time and activities, substantially as follows:
  - a. Require all employees in the Department to complete time cards on a daily basis, with the exception of those

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners take the following action to improve hiring and timekeeping procedures:

1. Instruct staff to review and update qualifications for the exempt positions and to adhere to these qualifications unless approval to deviate is obtained from the Executive Officer.
2. Adopt a policy that a permanent notice be posted on the bulletin board at each recreation center to advise that anyone wishing to be considered for an exempt position of Recreation Assistant when an opening occurs should contact the Center Director and complete an application. And further, send a copy of all applications submitted by persons with specialized skills who qualify for Recreation Assistant to the District Recreation Supervisor for consideration when such skills are needed at other centers.
3. Adopt a policy that no relative of a regular employee of the Department will be appointed to an exempt position or appointed on an emergency basis.
4. Adopt a policy that no person in a City-funded position be listed in a Federally-funded position which is exempt or is to be filled by emergency appointment unless approval in writing is obtained from the Personnel Department.
5. Instruct staff to make certain that persons are not appointed to positions unless they will be performing the duties specified for that classification.
6. Modify the Department Personnel Resolution to provide that only the General Manager will approve advance step hiring for exempt positions and that he will do this in writing.
7. Instruct staff to develop and implement procedures to shorten the time required to fill exempt positions and to stop making appointments prior to the necessary Department approvals.
8. Review, in cooperation with the Personnel Department, the policy of presentation of summer workers.
9. Instruct staff to prepare and implement improved procedures for reporting time and activities, substantially as follows:  
a. Require all employees in the Department to complete time cards on a daily basis, with the exception of those



individuals assigned to work regularly at recreation facilities. See Findings Section for information to be included on cards.

- b. Require each recreation facility to maintain a log similar to that used by the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation. Bound log books with prenumbered pages to be provided to each facility and all employees assigned to the facility be required to record their arrival and departure times and other information detailed in the Findings Section of this report.

The Director-in-charge to review the log regularly, signifying such review with his initials at the last entry. The Director to determine from the log the total hours worked by each employee under his supervision and enter same on a standardized bi-weekly time sheet to be signed by the director and forwarded to the timekeeper at the close of the period to support the payroll.

10. Obtain a City Attorney's opinion on the legality of part-time exempt employees being permitted to work more than 40 hours in a payroll period and making emergency appointments to exempt classifications to circumvent Charter Section 111.
11. Instruct staff to consolidate all materials concerning personnel, hiring, and timekeeping policies and procedures into the Department's loose-leaf Policy and Procedures Manual and to update this material on a continuing basis.

Employees assigned to work regularly at recreation facilities. The Planning Section for information to be included on cards.

1. Prepare each recreation facility to maintain a log similar to that used by the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation. Send the books with prenumbered pages to be furnished to each facility and all employees assigned to the facility be required to report their arrival and departure times and other information obtained in the Planning Section of this report.

The Director-in-Charge to review the log regularly, slightly each review with the initials of the last entry. The Director to determine from the log the total hours worked by each employee after his supervision and enter same on a standardized bi-weekly time sheet to be signed by the Director and forwarded to the timekeeper at the close of the period to support the payroll.

10. Obtain a City Attorney's opinion on the legality of part-time exempt employees being permitted to work more than 40 hours in a payroll period and making necessary appointments to exempt classes locations to overcome Charter Section 117.

11. Forward staff to consolidate all materials concerning personnel, rules, and timekeeping policies and procedures into the Department's local policy and procedures Manual and to update the manual on a continuing basis.

## Findings

### 1. Introduction

As requested, the Management Audit of the Department of Recreation and Parks has been extended to review the Department's hiring and timekeeping policies and procedures. Our review has been confined to the Recreation and Parks Branches where the majority of the employees are located.

### 2. Hiring Practices

- a. Regular full-time Civil Service positions - Individuals are selected from Civil Service lists. No problems with this process have come to our attention.
- b. Exempt positions and Emergency Appointments - The Department is authorized part-time positions on an exempt basis, and the City budget provides hundreds of thousands of hours each year for this purpose. For example, in the 1974-75 Budget, there were 82,550 hours for Recreation Assistant I, 395,471 hours for Recreation Assistant II, and 103,371 hours for Recreation Assistant III. In addition, Federal funds are used to employ persons on an exempt basis.

### Qualifications

There are general guidelines to distinguish between the Recreation Assistant classes, but these are not always followed. To prevent the possibility of favoritism and to insure that the most qualified candidate is selected, we believe that the qualifications for exempt positions should be reviewed and updated and that exceptions should not be authorized without approval from the Executive Officer.

### Lack of Publicity on Exempt Job Opportunities

Directors-in-charge normally select individuals for exempt positions who are known to the center staff as a result of their participation in center activities. Only persons selected for appointment fill out the Department's application form. People find out about job openings through word of mouth. There is no posting of announcements or advertising in the media.

We believe that a permanent notice should be posted on the bulletin board at each recreation center to advise that anyone wishing to be considered for an exempt position of Recreation Assistant when an opening occurs should contact the center director and fill out an application. Copies of the applications submitted by persons with specialized skills





should be filed with the District Recreation Supervisors for possible use at other centers.

#### Nepotism

There have been occasions where exempt positions have been filled by relatives of regular employees of the Department. To prevent this practice in the future, we suggest that the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners adopt a policy that no exempt position be filled by a relative of a regular employee and that no emergency appointments involving relatives be permitted. This does not preclude qualified relatives from being appointed to regular positions from Civil Service eligible lists.

#### Promotions through Federally-Funded Positions

There have also been instances where persons have left City-funded positions to be rehired on an exempt or emergency appointment basis in Federally-funded (CETA) positions at a higher salary. This appears to be contrary to the intent if not the legal requirements of the Federal program. We suggest the Board adopt a policy that no person who has occupied a City-funded position will be rehired in a Federally-funded position which is exempt or is to be filled by emergency appointment unless approval in writing is obtained from the Personnel Department.

#### Abuse of the Classification System

In the Construction and Maintenance Division the Department permitted two employees to be hired as Recreation Assistant II's when the duties were actually those of Shop and Craft Trainee. Persons employed as Recreation Assistant and Recreation Counselor have been used to do full-time clerical work. Such abuses of the classification system should no longer be permitted.

#### Advance Step Hiring in Exempt Positions

There have been at least two instances where individuals have been employed at an advanced step in exempt positions of Recreation Assistant and received higher compensation than they would have received if employed in the established Civil Service class for the work they performed. The "Classification Plan for Recreation Assistants" dated July 1, 1974, states that the first pay step will be the hiring rate and that if a person has exceptional knowledge, abilities, experience, and personal traits, he may be hired at a step above step one with written approval of both the Branch head and the Superintendent of Administration. We note that the position of Superintendent of Administration has not existed for several years. We believe the Department Personnel





Resolution should be modified to provide that only the General Manager may approve advance step hiring for exempt positions, and that he will do this in writing.

Filling Exempt Positions Prior to Approval

Because of the long period of time required to obtain Department approval to fill exempt positions, some supervisors will occasionally notify the applicant to report to work prior to receiving such approval. The Department should develop procedures to eliminate this problem.

Federally-Funded Summer Program Selection Problem

Youth employed under the Federally-funded Summer Program for Economically Disadvantaged Youth (SPEDY) work 25 hours per week for nine weeks. To qualify, their family income must be less than a certain amount depending on the size of the family and they must be between the ages of 14 and 21 and reside in the City of Los Angeles. Applications for SPEDY jobs are made available at various locations throughout the City including the schools, and the program is administered by the Mayor's Office of Urban Development. The Recreation and Parks Department is only one of a number of participating City departments and delegate agencies. Because the summer workers are on the Mayor's payroll, they are automatically exempt from the provisions of Charter Section 111.

Within the Recreation and Parks Department, recreation facilities are surveyed by Recreation Branch personnel to determine the number and type of SPEDY positions desired. This information is transmitted through the Personnel Department to the Office of Urban Development which determines the actual number of slots to be allocated. The Personnel Department then negotiates with the Recreation and Parks Department to determine the number of pre-select slots which will be allowed. Pre-select slots are those which can be filled with persons of the Department's choice provided they meet the program criteria. Recreation and Parks requested 100 percent pre-selects this year but they were allowed only about 70 percent because that is all they could justify to the Personnel Department which wanted to provide some jobs for persons who applied on an "open basis" and had no contacts with the recreation centers. Pre-selects were allowed at centers where there has been gang activity or where the jobs involved special talents such as the Drama Program and the Barrio Swim Teams Program.

There are more pre-select slots in certain councilmanic districts than others, ranging from none in the 5th and 12th districts to 90 percent in the 8th and 13th districts.



Selection of persons to fill the "open slots" is supervised by the Office of Urban Development. Applications were sorted by councilmanic district and then selections were made at random with representatives of the Personnel Department, participating City departments and delegate agencies, and community organizations present. Although this process appears fair, there is room for favoring certain individuals where the pre-select method is utilized. Recreation and Parks personnel state that the persons they select normally have been volunteers and have contributed to center activities.

We would suggest that the Board, in cooperation with the Personnel Department which administers the SPEDY Program for City departments, consider the following questions in determining its position with respect to pre-select slots next summer.

- (1) Should pre-selects be allowed at some centers solely because there is gang-related activity?
- (2) If it is desirable to select candidates from the area served by the center, why not sort the applications by "center area" and then pick at random?
- (3) Is it fair to allow a large number of pre-selects in some areas and few or none in others when it would be possible to use the random selection approach on the basis of center areas?

Two other selection problems were discovered with respect to the SPEDY Program hiring which should be corrected:

- (1) No verification is made of the family income reported by applicants. The applicant enters an estimate of his family income but this is not entered or signed by the parent. We believe the parent should furnish a signed estimate of family income.
- (2) Material distributed to supervisors and enrollees this year indicates that the age range is 14 through 22 years. The Federal criteria is 14 through 21 years and this information should be disseminated to all. The Personnel Department advises that to the best of its knowledge only two persons 22 years of age have been employed under the SPEDY Program in the Department of Recreation and Parks and steps are being taken to correct this.





### 3. Timekeeping Procedures

- a. The audit team found that timekeeping practices and documents vary among organizational units. Although the payroll worksheets themselves are uniform throughout the Department, the manner in which supervisors determine and report the time worked by their employees to the timekeeper varies considerably. For example, in one recreation district directors send in a form every two weeks projecting the time to be worked by each employee and then phone in adjustments; in another district, the directors phone in the time worked by each employee and no time document is forwarded to the timekeeper. At some centers, employees personally enter the time they arrive and leave on a form, while at others the director does it for them based on observation (to the extent that is possible). At many work locations there is no document on which the employee could enter the hours he works.
- b. To provide a more positive means to determine the time worked by each employee, we have reached the conclusion that standard procedures should be developed and implemented. Specifically, we believe that all employees in the department, with the exception of those individuals in the Recreation Branch assigned to work regularly at recreation facilities, should complete time cards on a daily basis. Those time cards should be signed by the supervisors and forwarded to the unit timekeeper. Space should be provided on the forms to enter the signature and printed name of the employee, signature of the supervisor, date, time in and out at the beginning and end of each day, total hours worked, time out of office and where to, name and phone number of person being visited if applicable, and time returned to office.

We further recommend that each recreation facility in the Recreation Branch be required to maintain a log similar to that used by the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation. Bound log books with pre-numbered pages should be provided to each facility and the following information entered into the log.

- (1) Employees assigned to the facility to sign their names to record arrival and departure times. Separate entries to be made for each arrival and each departure with the necessary explanation (e.g., arrival, out to bank funds, meetings, lunch, etc.). The last employee to leave will note whether the area has been secured for the night before signing out.





- (2) The arrival and departure of other departmental employees or other special visitors and the purpose of their visit be recorded.
- (3) All unusual incidents, such as burglary, damage to property, or malicious mischief, to be recorded when discovered.
- (4) Equipment received or transferred from the facility to be recorded.
- (5) Accidents to patrons or employees to be recorded at the time the accident occurs.

The director-in-charge should review the log regularly, signifying such review with his initials at the last entry. The director should also determine from the log the total hours worked by each employee under his supervision and enter same on a standardized bi-weekly time sheet to be signed by the Director and forwarded to the timekeeper at the close of the period to support the payroll. The log should prove useful to the district recreation supervisors and others.

- c. The timekeeping procedure for the Federally-funded SPEDY summer workers is adequate, and is completely separate from the Recreation and Parks Department's regular timekeeping. These positions are on the payroll of the Mayor's Office of Urban Development. We found during the audit that sign in/out sheets had not been supplied to many locations; however, we were told this would be corrected immediately.
- d. We found during the audit that SPEDY supervisors who are on the Recreation and Parks CETA payroll were allowed four hours paid time off per week to compensate for mileage. The Personnel Department is taking steps to provide mileage compensation.
- e. Some persons employed in exempt positions have been permitted to work more than 40 hours in a payroll period. This appears contrary to the intent of Charter Section 111 which states that exempt employees such as Recreation Assistants will not work more than half-time. We believe the Department should obtain a City Attorney's opinion on the legality of this and whether emergency appointments to normally exempt classifications should be permitted to circumvent Charter Section 111.

- 1. The arrival and departure of each departmental employee at other special visits and the purpose of these visits be recorded.
- 2. All general incidents, such as meetings, changes in personnel, or visitors received, to be recorded when appropriate.
- 3. Employees received at headquarters from the field to be recorded.
- 4. Incidents to persons or employees to be recorded at the time the incident occurs.
- 5. The director-in-charge should review the log regularly, maintaining each review with his initials at the last entry. The director should also determine from the log the total hours worked by each employee under his supervision and enter on a memorandum bi-weekly the sheet he is signed by the Director and forwarded to the timekeeper at the close of the period to report the payroll. The log should grow to be the district executive supervisor's and others.
- 6. The timekeeping procedure for the Federally-funded ERNY must be uniform in substance, and in complete agreement with the Department and the Department's central timekeeping. These questions are on the payroll of the Department's Office of Human Resources. We found during the audit that sign in-out sheets had not been received for many locations; however, we were told this would be corrected immediately.
- 7. We found during the audit that ERNY supervisors who are on the rotation and have ERNY payroll were allowed four hours paid time off per week to compensate for mileage. The Department is taking steps to provide mileage reimbursement.
- 8. Some persons employed in exempt positions have been permitted to work more than 40 hours in a payroll period. This appears contrary to the intent of Chapter Section 11 which states that exempt employees such as Washington Associates will not work more than full-time. We believe the Department should obtain a City Attorney's opinion on the legality of this and other exempt arrangements to determine if normally exempt classifications should be restricted to circumstances Chapter Section 11.



4. Policies and Procedures Manual

The Department of Recreation and Parks has a loose-leaf policies and procedures manual. However, it is out-of-date in many respects and does not contain all pertinent information. Information pertaining to personnel hiring and timekeeping procedures is found in various documents including the bound Recreation Branch Manual and the Supervisors Personnel Manual prepared by the Personnel Division. All of the policies and procedures should be consolidated into the one department manual and updated on a continuing basis.

The manual should clearly identify the responsibility of all staff and set forth the manner in which hiring is to be performed and forms are to be completed and processed. Also, the manual should prescribe the precise manner in which employee time reports shall be completed, reviewed, and approved.





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# Policy and Procedure Manual

The Department of Investigation and Police has a long-standing policy and procedure manual. However, it is out-of-date in many respects and does not contain all pertinent information. Information pertaining to personnel files and interviewing procedures is found in various documents including the Department's Branch Manual and the Department's Personnel Manual prepared by the Personnel Division. All of the policies and procedures should be consolidated into one department manual and updated on a continuing basis.

The manual should clearly identify the responsibility of all staff and set forth the manner in which things are to be performed and forms are to be completed and processed. Also, the manual should prescribe the precise manner in which employee time reports shall be completed, reviewed, and approved.